

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 EAE-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15  
CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 ACDA-07 PRS-01 L-03 SSO-00  
NSCE-00 INRE-00 EB-07 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /062 W  
-----021238Z 034579 /50S

O R 020935Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4278

INFO SECDEF WASHDC

JCS

CINCPAC

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SEOUL 4614

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, KS, US

SUBJECT: REACTION TO BROWN/HABIB VISIT ON TROOP WITHDRAWAL

REFS: (A) SEOUL 4498 (280404Z MAY 77), (B) SEOUL 4535  
(310850Z MAY 77)

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

SUMMARY: ROKG OFFICIALS PLEASED WITH HABIB/BROWN CONSULTATIONS,  
WHICH IT BELIEVES HELPED FOCUS ATTENTION ON  
REALISTIC ALTERNATIVES, AND WHICH CONVINCED OFFICIALS AT  
LEAST WE EARNEST ABOUT CONSULTING. GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO  
FOSTER UNITY IN FOCUSING ON COMPENSATORY MEASURES APPEAR  
TO BE HAVING SOME SUCCESS. PRESS, MILITARY, AND WELL  
INFORMED INTELLECTUALS, WHICL INDICATING CONTINUED ANXIETY,  
ARE DISPLAYING RESTRAINT. END SUMMARY.

1. OUR OVERALL IMPRESSION OF RESULTS OF BROWN/HABIB  
VISIT IS THAT IT HAS STRENGTHENED SUPPORT WITHIN GOVERN-  
MENT FOR PRESIDENT PAK'S ACCEPTANCE OF U.S. DECISION TO  
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WITHDRAW FORCES AND DESIRE TO PROCEED WITH DEVELOPMENT OF  
SOUND COMPENSATORY MEASURES. PRIOR TO VISIT PAK HIMSELF  
IMPROVED CHANCES FOR MORE WIDESPREAD OFFICIAL ACCEPTANCE  
BY ESCHEWING HIS ORIGINAL EXAGGERATED CLAIMS THAT ROKS COULD  
GO-IT-ALONE IN FAVOR OF MORE CREDIBLE POSITION THAT HE  
WOULD PREFER U.S. TROOPS TO STAY BUT WOULD NOT  
OPPOSE PRESIDENT CARTER'S POSITION. PRESIDENT PAK, HOWEVER,

HAS FELT THAT IT WAS NECESSARY NOT TO PERMIT OPPOSITION TO PREEMPT STANCE OF OPPOSITION TO WITHDRAWAL, BY INDICATING WHILE OPPOSED, HE IS PREPARED TO ACCEPT U.S. DECISION ON WITHDRAWAL. AGAINST THIS BACKGROUND BROWN/HABIB PRESENTATION HAS BROUGHT HOME TO GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS THAT ACCEPTANCE OUR DECISION ONLY FEASIBLE COURSE, AND THAT SAME MESSAGE IS BEGINNING TO MOVE IN SOPHISTICATED CIRCLES AND EDITORIAL PAGES. AT AME TIME THERE IS NO QUESTION HOWEVER THAT MANY, IN ALL SECTORS OF POLITY, REMAIN TO BE CONVINCED.

2. MOFA AMERICAN BUREAU DIRECTOR PAK SANG-YONG, ECHOED FORNMIN (SEPTTEL) AND CLEARLY ENUNCIATED ROK ADMINISTRATION VIEWS WHEN HE TOLD POLCOUNDS MOFA REGARDS BROWN/HABIB CONSULTATIONS AS HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL. MINISTRY OFFICIALS PARTICULARLY APPRECIATE FACT THAT DELEGATION INITIATED "REAL CONSULTATIONS," RATHER THAN SIMPLY INFORMING KOREANS OF U.S. PLANS. MOFA HAD NO DIFFICULTIES AT ALL WITH DIPLOMATIC ASPECTS OUR APPROACH, AND WAS "PARTICULARLY PLEASED" WITH U.S. SIDE'S PROMISE NOT TO DEAL DIRECTLY WITH NORTH KOREA. ROK MILITARY ACCORDING PAK HAD MORE DOUBTS AND QUESTIONS, BUT THEY TOO WERE AT LEAST REALISTICALLY ORIENTED. PAK CHARACTERIZED UNDER SECRETARY'S PRESENTATION AS "EXTREMELY PRECISE AND CLEAR" AND TOOK PRIDE IN ROK RESPONSES WHICH HE THOUGHT MOST REALISTIC. WHOLE VISIT HAD SUPPORTED MORA'S EFFORTS TO MOVE OTHERS AWAY FROM ILLUSORY IDEAS SUCH AS REVERSAL OF TROOP DECISION OR UNREAL COMPENSATORY REQUESTS SUCH AS MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY REVISION. PAK FELT DISCUSSIONS HAD BEEN IMPORTANT IN GETTING GOVERNMENT AND COUNTRY GENERALLY TO FOCUS ON POSITIVE MEASURES INSTEAD OF HAND-CONFIDENTIAL

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WRINGING.

3. ELSEWHERE WITHIN GOVERNMENT, MILITARY WORKING LEVEL APPEARS TO HAVE TAKEN A STEP BY KEEPING ITS COUNSEL MORE THAN BEFORE. INSTEAD OF REITERATING OBJECTION TO WITHDRAWAL, MILITARY CONTACTS OVER PAST SEVERAL DAYS HAVE GENERALLY REFRAINED FROM COMMENT ON CONSULTATIONS AND WITHDRAWAL ISSUE. ONE MAJOR GENERAL WHO STILL STOUTLY OPPOSES BASIC U.S. DECISION HAS TOLD UNC HE WAS UNABLE TO CONVINCE HIS SUPERIORS TO CHALLENGE ROKG STANCE. WHILE MOST ARE PROBABLY STILL UNINFORMED ABOUT CONTENTS OF DISCUSSIONS, AND THEIR RESTRAINT IS PROBABLY A RESULT OF INSTRUCTIONS, RELATIVE SILENCE REPRESENTS CHANGE.

4. AMONG OTHER THINGS HABIB/BROWN VISIT GAVE PRESIDENT PAK OPPORTUNITY TO CALL IN ASSEMBLY SPEAKER CHONG IL-KWON, OPPOSITION LEADER YI CHOL-SUNG, AND DRP LEADERSHIP TO ENLIST THEIR AID IN MOVING NATIONAL ASSEMBLY FORWARD IN UNITY (REF B). MIXED PROGRESS IN RESPONSE THIS APPROACH

IS EVIDENT IN REACTIONS OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MEMBERS.  
GOVERNMENT MEMBERS WE SEE SEEM MORE RESIGNED TO ACCEPTING  
WITHDRAWAL DECISION. THERE REMAINS CONSIDERABLE ANXIETY,  
AND STRONG PREFERENCE THAT TROOPS REMAIN, BUT DRP MEMBERS  
APPEAR TO BE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS NOT TO DISCUSS THEIR  
FEARS WITH AMERICANS. ON OTHER HAND OPPOSITION MEMBERS ARE  
STILL CLEARLY NOT CONVINCED U.S. DECISION IS IMMUTABLE.  
FOR POLITICAL REASONS AS WELL AS REASONS OF CONVICTION THEY  
ARE SURE TO RAISE CHALLENGING QUESTIONS AT FORTHCOMING  
SPECIAL ASSEMBLY SESSION DUE TO START JUNE 20. IN CONVER-  
SATIONS WITH US, OPPOSITION LEADER YI CHOL-SUNG IS STILL  
STRONGLY EMPHASIZING HIS CONCERNS ABOUT WITHDRAWALS.  
FORMER NDP SPOKESMAN HAN BYONG-CHAE THINKS IT EVEN  
POSSIBLE THAT NATIONAL ASSEMBLY COULD PASS RESOLUTION  
OPPOSING WITHDRAWAL, BUT ACKNOWLEDGES THIS STILL TWO  
WEEKS AWAY AND THAT GOVERNMENT WILL WORK TO CONTAIN ANY  
SUCH MOVE.

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NSCE-00 INRE-00 EB-07 TRSE-00 OMB-01 /062 W  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SEOUL 4614

5. MOVING OUT BEYOND GOVERNMENT PERIPHERY DEGREE OF  
ACCEPTANCE OF WITHDRAWAL IN WAE BROWN/HABIB IS MORE SOMETIME  
THING. GROUP OF INTELLECTUALS WERE APPARENTLY ALSO CALLED

IN BY PRESIDENT PAK AND GIVEN REVIEW OF VISIT, AND ONE CHARACTERIZED IT AS IMPRESSIVE. GENERALLY ACADEMIC POLITICAL SCIENTISTS HAVE BEEN MORE RELAXED ABOUT WITHDRAWAL ISSUE THAN LESS KNOWLEDGEABLE PEOPLE IN PAST TWO MONTHS. ONE ACADEMIC WHO IS KNOWN AS MEMBER OF OPPOSITION SAID THAT VISIT HAD POSITIVE IMPACT ON HIS CIRCLE BY INCREASING KOREAN CONFIDENCE IN U.S. COMMITMENT.

6. PRESS HAS SHIFTED FOLLOWING VISIT FROM EARLIER RATHER SHRILL TONE TO A MORE BALANCED MIXTURE OF CONTINUED REGRET OVER TROOPS'S DEPARTURE WITH STRESS ON NEED FOR COMPENSATORY MEASURES. PRESS EDITS IN GENERAL, WHICH MOST SUSCEPTIBLE TO GOVERNMENT DIRECTIONS ACCEPT TWO KEY POINTS: 1) THE IRREVOCABLENESS OF THE WITHDRAWAL DECISION; AND 2) THE FACT USG HAS OPENED GENUINE CONSULTATION ON REMAINING ISSUES. HANKUK ILBO, FOR EXAMPLE, MAY EQ PUBLISHED EDITORIAL REITERATING DESIRE FOR TROOPS TO STAY BUT CONCLUDING THAT IF DECISION IRREVERSIBLE, COMPENSATORY CONFIDENTIAL

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MEASURES NEEDED; OTHER PAPERS FOLLOW SIMILAR LINES, IN APPARENT RESPONSE TO GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE. AT SAME TIME HOWEVER, FRONT PAGES ARE STILL CARRYING GREAT NUMBER OF STORIES BASED ON STATEMENTS WHICH HAVE APPEARED IN U.S. OPPOSING TROOP DECISION. EFFECT OF THESE ALONG WITH A CONTINUING THREAD OF DOUBT IN ANALYSIS AND EDITS IS TO INDICATE THAT MANY EDITORS STILL NOT SATISFIED WITH USG RATIONALE (KYUNG HGY AND SINMUN SAID SO BLUNTLY), AND THAT THEY ARE SUSPICIOUS OF U.S. INTENT AND WISHFULLY HOPING DEBATE IN U.S. WILL PRODUCE REVERSAL.

7. ANOTHER INDICATOR OF CONTINUING FEARS UNDERLYING PRESS STORIES AND EDITS IS BIG PLAY PRESIDENT CARTER'S STATEMENT ON USE OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS HAS RECEIVED. THERE HAS BEEN CLEAR TENDENCY FOR PRESSMEN TO JUMP AT THIS AS PANACEA; CHOSEN ILBO FOR EXAMPLE SAW REMARKS AS "EPOCH MAKING" AND PROOF OF UNCLE SAM'S DETERMINATION TO KEEP DEFENSE COMMITMENT. WHILE THIS HAS PROVIDED PSYCHOLOGICAL BOOST, THERE IS A WORRISOME TENDENCY IN THIS REACTION TO GRASP AT STRAWS RATHER THAN TO ACCEPT NECESSITY OF BUCKLING DOWN TO DEVELOPING SOUND COMPENSATORY MEASURES.

8. MOVING EVEN MORE FURTHER FROM CENTER OF GOVERNMENT, CONVERSATIONS WITH MOE HARD CORE CHURCH AND INTELLECTUAL DISSIDENTS INDICATE CONTINUED DEEP CONCERN, NOT ONLY THAT U.S. DECISION COULD LEAD TO NK ATTACK BUT THAT PAK WILL USE SECURITY THREAT ONCE AGAIN TO STIFLE DISSENT AND CRITICISM. THEIR WORRIES ARE INCREASED BY SUCCESS OF HABIB/BROWN VISIT.

9. AS FOR GENERAL PUBLIC, SO FAR AS CONTACTS TO DATE INDICATE, IT REMAINS LARGELY UNINFORMED ABOUT CONTENTS OF CONSULTATIONS AND ANXIOUS ABOUT CONSEQUENCES OF WITHDRAWAL. TYPICAL COMMENTS TO EMBASSY OFFICERS ARE: "WE DON'T FEEL WE KNOW WHAT IS HAPPENING" AND "WE FEAR THAT THE COMMUNISTS (PRC AND USSR) WILL DECEIVE THE U.S. ONCE  
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AGAIN." THEY ARE APPRECIATIVE, HOWEVER, THAT DELEGATION PROVIDED CLEAR INDICATION OF CONCERN FOR AND UNDERSTANDING OF KOREAN PROBLEMS AT HIGH LEVEL OF USG.

10. NET IMPRESSION IS THAT HABIB/BROWN VISIT WAS SUCCESSFUL INsofar AS IT COULD BE IN HELPING TO CRYSTALIZE THE REALITIES IN MINDS OF GOVERNMENT OFFICIALDOM AND GETTING CONSULTATIONS OFF TO BEST POSSIBLE START. IN WAKE OF VISIT ROKG IS WORKING HARDER TO GET BODY POLITIC TO FOCUS ON CONSTRUCTIVE ACTION INSTEAD OF HAND WRINGING. THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT EFFORTS ARE TAKING BETTER HOLD IN KEYQUARTERS WITHIN GOVERNMENT AND SOME PROMISE THAT ACCEPTANCE OF PRESIDENT PAK'S CONSTRUCTIVE FOCUS IS SPREADING ALONG ROKG PERIPHERY. OBVIOUSLY THE JOB WILL TAKE SOME TIME STILL AND RAPIDITY, DEGREE, AND DURABILITY OF PUBLIC ACCEPTANCE WILL DEPEND ON RESULTS OF CONTINUING CONSULTATIONS.  
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## Message Attributes

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